Personal

5. (new)   The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said interface machine is a computer.

6. (new)   The apparatus of claim 5 wherein said first sound processing mechanism is a sound card configured to run an audio streaming program.

7. (new)   The apparatus of claim 1 wherein said remote modem is configured to communicate with automated systems that incorporate intelligence to gather status information.

8. (new)   A method for effecting audible communication between a local system and a remote system over a Wide Area Network (WAN), comprising the steps of:

configuring a remote communication mechanism in said remote system to receive transmission signals;

converting said transmission signal into an audio output signal;

processing said audio output signal for transmission over said WAN as a network audio signal;

receiving and processing said network audio signal to provide a continuous audio signal at said local system.

9. (new)   The method of claim 8 wherein said remote modem is configured to communicate with automated systems that incorporate intelligence to gather status information.

10. (new)   The method of claim 8 wherein said communication mechanism is a remote modem.

11. (new)   The method of claim 8 wherein said remote communication mechanism is a telephone.